GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
RAILWAYS
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:3348
ANSWERED ON:05.02.2004
CRIMES IN TRAINS
M.V.V.S MURTHI

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the crimes in trains are increasing year by year and there are growing perception of insecurity among rail passengers;

(b) if so, whether the Government has convened a high level meeting in this regard and also to discuss RPF Act; and

(c) if so, the decisions taken in the meeting and the progress made on their implementation?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI BASANAGOUDA R. PATIL)

(a): No, Sir.

(b) & (c) Yes, Sir. The Ministry of Railways constituted a Committee on 15.1.2000 to go into the issue of Security of Railway passengers. The High Level Committee after detailed deliberations made various recommendations in accordance with the terms of reference.

The Committee recommended that since policing on the Railways is the constitutional responsibility of the State Governments, certain matters relating to the security of Railway passengers could be segregated from the policing functions and be given to the Railway Protection Force. The Railway Protection Force should take up these security duties without going into the realm of policing, which will continue to be the responsibility of the State Governments.

The Committee also recommended that the Railway Protection Force may be given the following additional duties relating to security of passengers:

(i) Escorting of passenger trains in vulnerable areas.

(ii) Providing access control, regulation and general security on the platforms, in passenger area and circulating areas.

The Railway Ministry accepted the above recommendations of the Committee and made certain amendments in the Railway Protection Force Act, 1957, where-

(i) Railway Protection Force will be legally enabled to provide protection and safeguard to the passenger and his luggage.

(ii) Railway Protection Force will be able to take steps for prevention of any cognizable offence against the passengers and will also be legally empowered to apprehend any person who is involved in such offences.

(iii) Railway Protection Force will be able to provide security to the passenger areas including platforms and trains.
As far as the Railways Act, 1989, is concerned, there are adequate provisions in the Act to take care of most of the problems of the Railways. Under Section 179 of the Act, Railway servants are empowered to arrest the offenders committing offences mentioned without warrant and to produce the offenders before the nearest Magistrate. Any member of the Railway Protection Force, as a Railway servant, can exercise these powers of arrest. However, the Railway Protection Force was not empowered to either investigate or enquire into the cases or launch prosecution in the court of law against such offenders.

It was felt that for effectively dealing with the cases under the Railways Act, the Railway Protection Force may be empowered to enquire and launch prosecution against the persons committing offences under the Railways Act.

Accordingly, RPF by an amendment of the Railways Act/RPF Act has been empowered to deal with the offences, which directly relate to the functioning of the Railways, as the Police being preoccupied with the law and order duties, have little time for these minor offences.

It was against this backdrop that the RPF Act and the Railways Act have been amended. The main purpose is to supplement the efforts of the State Governments to reinforce the security of the passengers and the passenger area on Indian Railways.